

February 26, 2023

Dear Esteemed Members of the Housing Committee:

I write today to ask you to vote NO to HB06633. This "Fair Share" bill would impose extreme density on our local communities without regard to existing capacity. It would be catastrophic for most of Connecticut. I have lived in New Canaan for fifty-four years – since 1969 – and have seen this town evolve as every American town does with what is needed at the local level. For the state government to overlay the local zoning code which has sustained New Canaan since it was incorporated in 1801 is just wrong. I agree that there must be housing to help schoolteachers, firemen, law enforcement. But that should be left to the local law makers instead of stuffing it down our throats as is done in a dictatorship or is prevalent under a communist government.

I have firsthand experience with what is being suggested in Hartford. My firm did a project in Dalian, China where the firm that retained our services to design five homes for their executive officers built hundreds of units for the working class. This was about ten years ago. I watched with horror that recently many of the units were being knocked down as they were not rented or sold. Socialism does not work. I am a very good example coming from a country with social aspirations. I am willing to testify if need be, as to the evils of social society brings with it.

The bill would result in municipalities being sued and forced to build at public expense housing when the private sector does not do so, when a municipality does not meet its Fair Share allocation, which is not based on market demand or the wishes of state residents, but rather the determination of the executive branch, as informed by housing advocates and organizations.

[Open Communities Alliance](#) says there is demand for 140,000 affordable, but only 2,500 are homeless in Connecticut. Who are we building for? Exactly, this is what occurred in Dalian, China, where the builder was paid by the government to build high rise towers with no one to occupy them. Eventually the towers were taken down. This is not the way we work in the United States.

[New Jersey](#) is the only state that has had a fair share plan for decades and it has not improved diversity in communities, and it has not created affordability. Why would Connecticut now want to follow with a fair share plan when the model in New Jersey has not been successful and has spurred litigation.

Let's not make decisions where the very communities that you represent will suffer. We don't negotiate against ourselves.

Fair Share provides for a ten-year timetable for municipalities to meet their "Fair Share" allocations; in prior years, the bill's advocates have indicated that they intend for up to 300,000 units to be constructed within this period (enough to house approximately 700,000 persons). In addition to lawsuits forcing public construction, municipalities that do not comply may be subject to "default zoning" overriding all local land use regulation, permitting up to 20 units per acre in much of the state. Note that "fair share" does not replace 8-30g but is in addition to it which needs to be badly reformed. You can't just say housing is needed everywhere, unilaterally, and double down on more one-size-fits-all mandates to build, build, build.

We need proper metrics for demand for housing, such as where jobs are in the state, what is the access to transportation, what are the limits of infrastructure, water tables, sewage capacity, and the environment, and cost of living in each area. This bill only looks at regional income, declares a formula, and mandates housing. There could not be a more ridiculous way to look at where affordable housing is necessary.

Let's be clear – this bill would get rid of single-family zoning in Connecticut. Land values would come crashing down and the town would lose its charming character which is the reason why my wife and our friends live here. We may as well move to another state or even country if this law is enacted. Creating affordable housing with all stakeholders involved is a laudable goal but getting rid of zoning and established neighborhoods is not. We know there is a better way such as towns getting seed money from the State to build 100 percent affordable units and fixing our voucher system. Land is finite and unique, and land use decisions permanently affect a Town's economic, ecological and community health. We can and must find a better way. This bill does not make Connecticut more affordable. It pushes Connecticut to become a state which will lose its land value and become dependent on the Federal Government to assist it to assist the homeless who are not there.

Sincerely,

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